

The Guest Cat

Takashi Hiraide

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A wonderful sui generis novel about a visiting cat who brings joy into a couple's life in Tokyo

A bestseller in France and winner of Japan's Kiyama Shohei Literary Award, *The Guest Cat*, by the acclaimed poet Takashi Hiraide, is a subtly moving and exceptionally beautiful novel about the transient nature of life and idiosyncratic but deeply felt ways of living. A couple in their thirties live in a small rented cottage in a quiet part of Tokyo; they work at home, freelance copy-editing; they no longer have very much to say to one another. But one day a cat invites itself into their small kitchen. It leaves, but the next day comes again, and then again and again. Soon they are buying treats for the cat and enjoying talks about the animal and all its little ways. Life suddenly seems to have more promise for the husband and wife — the days have more light and color. The novel brims with new small joys and many moments of staggering poetic beauty, but then something happens....

As Kenzaburo Oe has remarked, Takashi Hiraide's work "really shines." His poetry, which is remarkably cross-hatched with beauty, has been acclaimed here for "its seemingly endless string of shape-shifting objects and experiences, whose splintering effect is enacted via a unique combination of speed and minutiae."



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